

Message Text

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R 241210Z AUG 73

FM AMEMBASSY FORT LAMY

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6908

INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY BAMAKO

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE

UNCLAS FORT LAMY 1374

AFDROUGHT

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAGR EAID CD

SUBJ: PROSPECTS FOR 1973 MILLET AND SORGHUM CROPS

1. SUMMARY: THE 1973 AGRICULTURAL SEASON HAS STARTED LATE AND BADLY AND ALTHOUGH POCKETS OF SATISFACTORY PLANTINGS ARE FOUND THROUGHOUT MOST OF CHAD'S SAHELIAN PREFECTURES, THERE ARE GOING TO BE WIDESPREAD CROP FAILURES IN MANY AREAS FOR THE SECOND CONSECUTIVE YEAR. END SUMMARY.

2. THERE ARE CONTRADICTORY STATEMENTS ABOUT 1973 CEREALS CROP ESTIMATES BUT BECAUSE OF EXCEPTIONALLY LATE BEGINNING OF RAINS AND THEIR INFREQUENCY AND INSUFFICIENCY THROUGH JULY IN ALL SAHELIAN PREFECTURES, BEST ESTIMATES ARE THAT HARVEST WILL AT MOST EQUAL UNCLASSIFIED

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THAT OF 1972 AND COULD FALL FAR SHORT OF THAT LEVEL. ASECNA

RAINFALL STATISTICS SHOW EXTREME DEFICIENCIES FOR ALL SAHEL AREA, WITH FORT LAMY CUMULATIVE 1973 MEASURES OF 93.6 MM ONLY ONE-THIRD OF NORMAL AND FAR BELOW 1972. FORT LAMY'S JULY RAINFALL AT 54.1 MM WAS JUST 4.1 MM ABOVE LOWEST RECORDED IN 40 YEARS OF STATION'S EXISTENCE.

3. LATENESS, SPORADICITY AND INSUFFICIENCY OF JUNE RAINS CAUSED LOSS OF SEVERAL PLANTINGS. AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT OFFICE (ONDR) REPORTS "EFFECTIVE" PLANTINGS BEGAN ONLY JULY 20 IN BATHA, KANEM, CHARI-BAGUIRMI, OUADDAI AND BILTINE AND JULY 31 IN SALAMAT AND GUERA, ALL GENERALLY BEHIND LAST YEAR'S PERFORMANCES. ONDR REPORT ASKS THAT GOC DEMARCHES BE MADE NOW TO DONOR AGENCIES FOR MAXIMUM FOOD AID FOR NEXT YEAR.

4. RECENT TRAVELS OF ASSISTANT ADO'S BERRY AND HOGAN FROM MASSAGUET THROUGH MANDELIA AND MY OWN TO MASAKORY IN NORTHERN CHARI-BAGUIRMI HAVE LED TO CONCLUSION THAT ONLY PROVIDENTIAL RAINFALL DURING AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER WILL PRODUCE ADEQUATE CROPS FOR THIS REGION. BECAUSE LAST HALF SEPTEMBER IS NORMALLY FAIRLY DRY, 1973 WILL HAVE TO BE EXCEPTIONAL TO PRODUCE EVEN A POOR CROP IN AREAS LIKE THIS. EVEN 60-DAY MATURING VARIETIES OF MILLET ARE LIKELY TO FAIL. LONGER MATURING ONES CAN NOW BE WRITTEN OFF.

4. FROM OTHER SOURCES REPORTS ARE CONTRADICTORY, BUT MOST OF THESE ARE IMPRESSIONISTIC INCLUDING REPORTS FROM PREFECTS WITHOUT TRAINING OR BACKGROUND IN AGRICULTURE. SOME POCKETS HAVE HAD REMARKABLY GOOD RAINFALL AND PRESENT A GREENESS IN DRAMATIC CONTRAST TO SURROUNDING ARID AREAS. FIELDS OF SHOULDER-HIGH MILLET CAN BE SEEN ADJACENT TO STUNTED, RUINED CROPS, WITNESSING TO NARROW PATH OF TIMELY RAINFALL. EVIDENCE BEING SO CONTRARY, NON-TRAINED OBSERVERS FALL INTO OPTIMISTIC AND PESSIMISTIC CAMPS ACCORDING TO THEIR PROPENSITIES, BUT THE PROFESSIONALS, RELYING ON STATISTICS, ALL PREDICT ANOTHER YEAR OF FAMINE. NEHER

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